

# Episcopal JOURNAL

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**NEWS** Biden may renew refugee welcome and resettlement



**FEATURE** Lent resources prepare souls for reflection



**ARTS** Leonard Cohen inspired artist's Lenten journey

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## Creative ideas for a COVID-19 Ash Wednesday

By Neva Rae Fox  
*The Living Church*

The beginning of Lent 2021 is mere days away, raising questions about how to approach Ash Wednesday during a pandemic. What will the day look like? Will churches be open? Will there be the imposition of ashes? Will the imposition of ashes be safe? Will there be restrictions? Will the vaccine be available in time?

On-line services are planned, and creative suggestions about ashes have surfaced, many involving Ziploc bags, plastic containers, a long stick, and lots of gloves. Some ideas include leaving ashes for people in church; sending packets of ashes home; having packets available for congregants to pick up; and forgoing ashes completely.



Photo/Annika Gordon/unsplash.com

“For years I have been advocating the idea of people signing themselves with ashes to indicate their willing commitment to enter into the disciplines of Lent, rather than having that ‘imposed,’” said the Rev. Don Caron, St. David’s, Cranbury, N.J. “We are considering making available little packets of ashes that can be dis-

### AGONY IN THE GARDEN

**Christ on Gethsemane**  
*The image of Jesus praying after the Last Supper, with his three disciples too weary to watch, is from the Mafa Christian community in North Cameroon. In the 1970s, with the help of French missionaries, community members acted out Gospel scenes, which were photographed. French artists painted the scenes and gave the artworks to the community. The 63 works are called “Jesus Mafa” pictures and are available at the Vanderbilt University Divinity Library website: <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu>.*

tributed along with a prayer card with an appropriate statement of the intention for the season. I am also considering distributing a sticker in the form of an ash cross that can be put in a prominent place, such as a mirror or computer screen.”

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## Presiding Bishop calls country to ‘face painful truths,’ seek healing love

By Egan Millard  
*Episcopal News Service*

Drawing on the words of Abraham Lincoln and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Presiding Bishop Michael Curry implored Americans to choose community over chaos in a message to the Episcopal Church as the United States reels from the Jan. 6 mob attack on the Capitol, incited by President Donald Trump and led by his supporters.

“A monument to democracy, the Capitol of the United States of America, was desecrated and violated with violence by vandals. Lives were lost. A nation was wounded. Democracy itself was threatened,” Curry said in message to the church on Jan. 8.

Curry connected the current situation with past crises, including the Civil War, the civil rights struggle of the late 1960s and the apartheid regime in South Africa, as well as more recent ones such as the violent white supremacist march in Charlottesville, Va., in 2017, and last year’s murder of George Floyd



Photo/Leah Millis/REUTERS

An explosion caused by a police munition is seen while supporters of President Donald Trump gather in front of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

at the hands of police in Minneapolis.

“In the moment of a national crisis, a moment of great danger ... a people must decide, ‘Who shall we be?’” Curry said, offering a stark choice between further chaos and beloved community.

“I want to submit that the way of love that leads to beloved community is the only way of hope for humanity. Consider the alternative. The alternative is chaos, not community. The alternative is the abyss of anarchy, of chaos, of hatred, of bigotry, of violence, and that

alternative is unthinkable. We have seen nightmarish visions of that alternative.”

Echoing the presiding bishop’s condemnation, bishops and other leaders across the Episcopal Church have spoken out against the terrorist assault and the lies about election fraud that sparked it.

The bishop of Washington and the dean of Washington National Cathedral, after issuing a video statement on Jan. 6 condemning the attack and Trump’s role in instigating it, said they would offer brief prayers for the country along with interfaith partners every day until Inauguration Day.

“We invite you to spend five minutes in prayers for safety, solace and national unity,” the cathedral’s staff wrote. The first video in the series — available on the cathedral’s website and social media channels — features Dean Randy Hollerith and Rabbi Bruce Lustig, senior rabbi of Washington Hebrew Congregation.

As the occupation of the Capitol was ongoing on Jan. 6, Hollerith and Washington Bishop Mariann Budde rebuked Trump and the terrorists in a video statement filmed at

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Due to U.S. Postal Service delays, Episcopal Journal subscribers may receive this issue later than usual.



## CONVERSATIONS

## Why I love Lent



By Pamela A. Lewis

IT SEEMS ONLY a few days ago that I took down my Christmas wreath, put away the elf on the shelf (I know - it's a bit creepy, but it's still cute.), and stopped being asked, "So how was your Christmas?" Now the question is, "So, what are you giving up for Lent?"

For those like myself who observe Lent, this is *the* big question at the start and at the heart of the season. It is a personal and deeply important question, one into which all of one's values, attitudes towards favorite activities, beliefs and behaviors are tightly wrapped. What one gives up (or takes on, as many now do) during Lent is a personal matter, between the individual and his or her conscience, between the individual and God.

The emphasis on self-reflection of this season is one of the reasons why I love Lent. After the

the glittering ebullience of Christmas and New Year's, Lent takes me inward and calls me to be

still. While the holidays can leave me breathless, Lent invites me to catch my breath. In the 40 days that unfurl from Ash Wednesday, I engage in a kind of spiritual house cleaning by taking a hard look at the state of my relationship with God, with others, and with myself.

I recently became aware of a painting called "Ash Wednesday," completed in 1860 by the German artist Carl Spitzweg. It's significant, when regarding this work, that the day before Ash Wednesday is known in some cultures as Mardi Gras, French for "Fat Tuesday," the last day of fun and feasting before the penitential season of Lent.

Spitzweg's canvas depicts a solitary harlequin, still decked out in his color-

ful and jolly costume and pointed hat (a fool's cap perhaps), although the festivities of the previous day are over. But when we look more closely, we realize this figure of revelry and excess, with arms folded and head down, is sitting in what appears to be a prison cell.

A shaft of light comes through the cell's only window and illuminates the lonely figure, who seems deep in thought. His only sustenance is a jug of water. Every element in the painting forcefully outlines and underscores what a traditional Lent involves: self-reflection about and repentance of the "sins" of excess; fasting and self-denial; (re) encountering God.

This view of Ash Wednesday and Lent is severe, uncompromising, and, some might argue, joyless. Yet it is fully in keeping with those tough, uncompromising words the priest utters when imposing the dark ashes on my forehead: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

This year, however, will be different. In the Diocese of New York, Bishop Andrew Dietsche has directed that, to avoid the risk of further spreading the coronavirus, the imposition of ashes should be suspended.

Although the Book of Common Prayer expresses no particular instructions regarding ashes, other than their imposition by the minister at the liturgy, the physical distribution of ashes on the foreheads of the faithful is an ages-old practice. Many people look forward to it.

I will miss going to my church, walking up its long center aisle to stand before

the priest tasked with dipping his thumb into the ashes, with which he then traces a cross on my forehead while pronouncing those ancient and bracing words.

I admit that I will miss the wondering glances of passersby and other subway commuters to that spot above my nose. I - We - will miss receiving that visible sign that identifies me - us - as Christ's own. But I also recognize that this loss is yet another necessary one we need to count in order to one day reclaim a greater health. Ash Wednesday and the season it inaugurates is concerned with our unseen, rather than seen, appearance.

On Ash Wednesday, Christians are invited to observe a "holy Lent," a season of penitence and fasting, a season when they take stock of their lives, pray, read, and meditate on God's holy Word.

This is solemn, not morose work. It is not a 40-day sentence to sport a scratchy hair shirt, to subsist on a diet of locust crunch, and to wear a dour expression to show how deeply repentant one is. That is a soul-killing Lenten observance that only leaves the observer angry and resentful rather than spiritually cleansed and fulfilled.

As for giving up things, there is more to Lent than simply eschewing chocolate, alcohol or caffeine. While that may be a feature for some observers, there is more to the season than food and drink deprivation. For example, pride, anger, bigotry, wastefulness and pollution of the creation, injustice, cruelty, and indifference to the suffering of others are

some of the other greater sins worthy of inclusion on the "giving up" list.

As it is impossible to renounce in one Lent all of the wrong things that compromise my relationship with God and others, I select one or two that I feel could benefit from my undivided attention. That can be a lot if those one or two things keep getting in the way of my having a life that is more whole. But if I am fully honest with myself, I will choose the most important wrong things about myself in need of grace-filled repair.

It is the quest for honesty and truth that inspires my love of Lent. Where so much — too much — around us is unreal, inauthentic and falsified, this is a season that requires truthfulness and reality.

At a time where very little is spiritually or morally required of us, Lent urges us to think deeply, like Spitzweg's harlequin, about our frailties and the world's and our brokenness. Perhaps that is why, unlike our other seasons or holidays, Lent has escaped commercialism's grasp. It cannot be prettified, glamorized or bowdlerized, nor can it be fashioned into a consumer item with a price tag. There are no Lent cards to write and send, no decorations to deck the halls.

Finally, what I also love about Lent is that anyone can engage in what this season offers. There is no need to be a Christian or even a believer to adopt some of its practices.

Discovering the benefits of self-reflection, giving our time and talent to something or someone other than ourselves, and thinking and talking about life's harder sides can be universal, not just Christian, activities. A season that bids us all to participate in such important, life-enhancing activities deserves our love. ■

*Pamela A. Lewis writes about topics of faith. This article was first published at Grow Christians, [www.growchristians.org](http://www.growchristians.org).*



Image/Staatsgalerie Stuttgart/Wikiart  
"Ash Wednesday," Carl Spitzweg, oil on canvas, 1860.

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



READERS WILL NOTICE quite a bit of content in this issue anticipating the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17.

It seems as if we were able to find more books, resources, commentary, programs, lectures than usual, even though much of the activity is online and the physical imposition of ashes has been suspended in many churches.

Perhaps this is appropriate for a season of repentance and reflection during a dark age. One year ago, Ash Wednesday took place on Feb. 26 and the pandemic lockdowns had not yet begun to bite. So here is another COVID-19 loss experienced for the first time.

No matter how strong our faith, how much we may be determined to bear down and make it through to the other side of a more normal world, we have to acknowledge that grief accompanies loss. Many are in real pain over an Easter, a Pentecost, a Christmas — and now, a Lent — without physical human contact.

Now we can add a second crisis — political turmoil ratcheted up to an unbelievably violent

level. As Christians in society, should we consider whether reflection and repentance applies to our actions as citizens? Those actions include the leaders we elect as well as the way we discuss points of view with others.

So the Lenten journey is different this year, but it's always been different for each person, whether the classic avoidance of chocolate or alcohol, or the addition of a faithful practice such as prayer.

In this issue of the Journal, Chris Cuthill's story about experiencing Lent while listening to the music of Leonard Cohen really resonates with me. (If you want a prescient take on today's events, try Cohen's 1992 album "The Future" and the song "Democracy.")

Much as I love Cohen's work, I think I may walk my Lenten journey in the realm of instrumental music. Think of Schubert's "Ave Maria" in the arrangement for violin and piano, or pianist Myra Hess' performance of Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring."

Words are my life, but it's also good to dwell in a space with sound and no words. In today's tumultuous world, it seems like a calm open door to prayer. ■

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## NEWS

# Virginia, General seminaries pursue joint venture

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

The Episcopal Church's two oldest and largest seminaries, Virginia Theological Seminary and General Theological Seminary, announced Jan. 13 that they had reached an agreement to begin "the process of exploring partnership options" that could include shared faculty and "collaborative governance" while maintaining two distinct institutions.

"Purposefully walking together in as many ways as possible is our goal going forward," the chairs of the two seminaries' boards, David Charlton at VTS and Atlanta Bishop Robert Wright at General, said in a joint written statement. "We both put service to the church at the top of both of our missions."

The details and extent of this partnership are still under consideration. The seminaries underscored that their growing collaboration is not a merger. "This is an imaginative and innovative model of cooperation in a shared venture," the seminaries said in a list of talking points about their discernment process.

General Theological Seminary in New York was founded in 1817. VTS,

founded in 1823, is located in Alexandria, Va. The boards of the two seminaries met Jan. 8, and each voted to begin a process of review, starting with the seminaries' legal and financial positions and then seeking opportunities for "shared programming and some form of collaborative governance."

The seminaries, in pursuing "shared leadership," say they envision "a model that safeguards seminary identities and safeguards the assets and endowments of each institution." Seminarians still will receive degrees from either VTS or General.

"The ultimate goal is two stronger institutions, with more faculty, more students, and more opportunities to create program that makes a real difference for the work of The Episcopal Church within the world," the seminaries said. "Working together will enable the two seminaries to do more than they can separately."

This partnership will build on the seminaries' experience of working to-

**What do we do together that we couldn't do by ourselves?**

— The Rev. Lorenzo Lebrija



General Theological Seminary, left, is located in New York and Virginia Theological Seminary is in Alexandria, Va.

gether on the TryTank Experimental Lab, a joint project founded in 2019 to develop new approaches to church growth and innovation.

"We have a lot more in common, which is serving the church and serving Christ in this world," the Rev. Lorenzo Lebrija, TryTank's director, said in an interview with Episcopal News Service after the announcement. He graduated from General in 2014 and now is attending VTS for his doctorate.

A deeper partnership between the seminaries "opens up more possibilities for the future, and that's really what this is about," Lebrija said. There eventually may be some cost savings, he said, but with both seminaries financially sound, that wasn't the primary motivation. "What do we do together that we couldn't do by ourselves?"

To answer that question, the review of the seminaries' operations and development of a collaborative framework is expected to continue through November, followed by decisions on how to move forward together.

"I am encouraged to hear that these two seminaries are exploring creative possibilities

for how to more faithfully, effectively and strategically form leaders for the movement of Jesus Christ, through the Church, for the sake of the 21st century world," Presiding Bishop Michael Curry said in the seminaries' news release. "This is the crucial question. All other issues of practicalities and logistics must fall under the primary question of what serves our participation in the mission of God as followers of Jesus of Nazareth and his way of love and life." ■

## Welby introduces prayers before Lambeth Conference

### The Lambeth Conference

At a time where the world still faces the challenge of COVID-19 alongside ongoing issues like climate crisis, poverty, economic injustice, conflict and inequality, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has launched a Lambeth Conference prayer journey to share "prayers of hope for the world."

The prayer journey invites Christians around the world to join in praying for world issues. It features a wide range of prayers that have been shared by Anglican bishops, clergy and laity. Often recorded via virtual technology during times of lockdown — these prayers have been sent from dioceses and nations from across the global Anglican Communion.

Prayers will focus on daily themes of hope, proclaiming good news, pandemic response, people, planet, peace, politics, justice and poverty.

In a video message about the prayer journey, Welby also noted how the prayer season will mark the start of the Lambeth Conference community journeying together in the lead up to the meeting of Anglican bishops, which was rescheduled to 2022 because of the pandemic.

During 2021, the conference community will be invited to take part in a series of virtual or regional discussions on some of the conference themes — in preparation for the gathering.

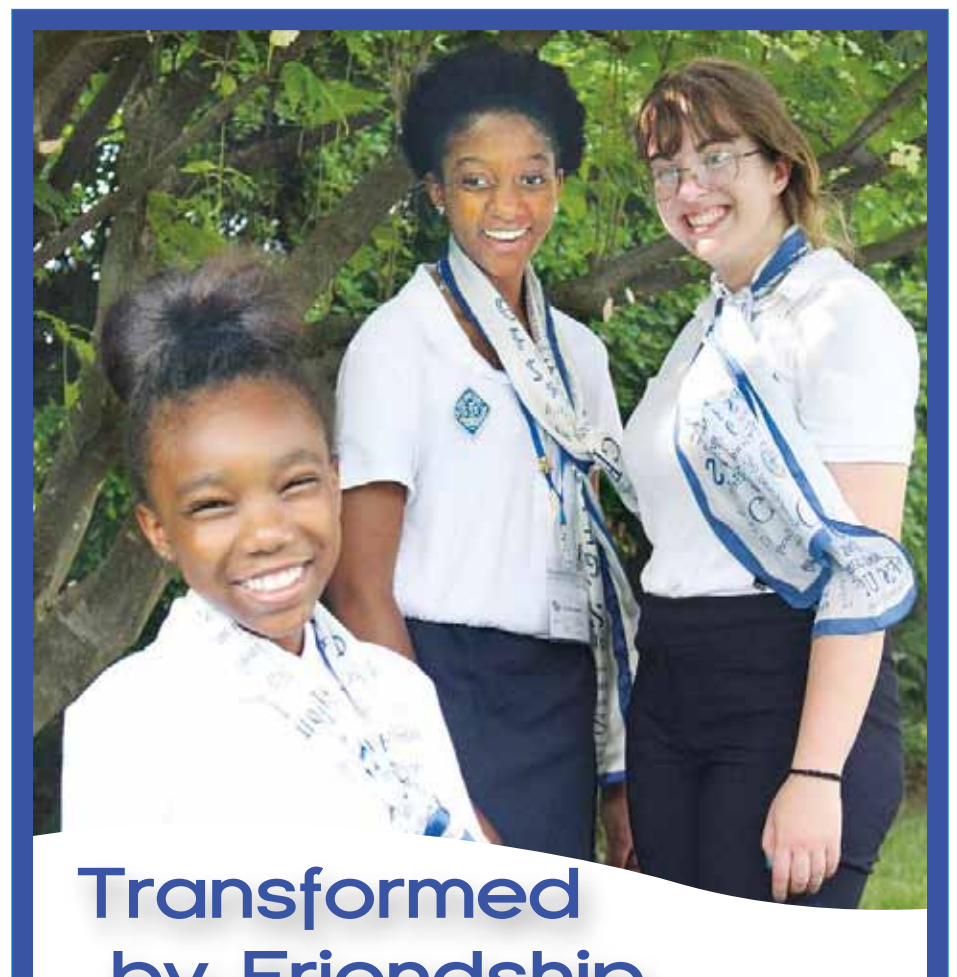


Photo/Lambeth Conference

Welby

The Lambeth Conference will offer a chance to "grapple with many ... world issues, as well as matters of common interest in the life of our Anglican Communion," Welby said in a video message. "To start this journey off, we'll begin as we always must: in prayer. ... In such difficult times — and with our world facing such challenges — we need to listen to God, to be alert to the needs of the world and to love one another as we share our prayers and our needs."

The season of prayer will include prayers from Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Michael Curry; Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell; Archbishop Thabo Makgoba of Cape Town; Archbishop Daniel Sarfo of Kumasi, Ghana; Bishop Pradeep Samantroy, Amritsar, North India; Bishop Coadjutor Samy Shehata, Egypt, and Archbishop Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. ■



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## AROUND THE CHURCH

## 'From Many, One' campaign aims to heal divisions

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

The Episcopal Church is launching a campaign, "From Many, One," to promote a new spiritual framework for Episcopalians to engage in tough conversations with family, friends and neighbors, bridging the intense divisions that threaten to tear apart communities in the United States and beyond.

Starting Jan. 18, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Episcopalians will be encouraged to invite others to join them in "conversations across difference" guided by four questions: Who do you love? What have you lost? Where does it hurt? And what do you dream?

"I have never been more profoundly aware of the need for passionate and practical commitment to the way of unselfish, sacrificial love that Jesus taught," Presiding Bishop Michael Curry said Jan. 11 in a news release announcing the church's "From Many, One" campaign. "Conversations with others across difference is not just a nice thing to do. It is a spiritual practice of love in action."

The campaign, which rejects retribution, punishment and "othering," is in-

## FROM MANY, ONE CONVERSATIONS ACROSS DIFFERENCE

spired by the Latin phrase on the Great Seal of the United States: E Pluribus Unum, which means "from many, one." The motto was proposed for the first Great Seal by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson in 1776. The phrase offered a strong statement of the American determination to form a single nation from a collection of states.

Although the church's program it was developed before the mob of Trump supporters took over the Capitol for several hours on Jan. 6, it is launching at a time when many Americans are reeling from recent events. The goal is to celebrate difference and promote healing by emphasizing listening and curiosity.

So how will "From Many, One" help Episcopalians respond faithfully to today's divisions? The campaign offers steps for facilitating one-on-one conver-

sations that allow open expression of differences without judgment. Before setting up those conversations, participants can review the guide developed by the church. Engaging in "the spiritual practice of conversation across difference can help to knit us all into a diverse, more perfect union," the guide says.

The guide encourages participants to reflect on the framework's four questions. Participants also may

watch videos of Curry and other leaders modeling these types of conversations. The guide provides practical tips and suggestions for approaching these conversations with openness and curiosity in search of "God in the presence of the other person."

"Watching the tragic upheaval in our nation's Capitol, I was struck again by the urgency — and difficulty — of cut-

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## TRANSITIONS

## Former Georgia Bishop Henry I. Louttit Jr. dies at 82

Bishop Henry I. Louttit Jr., who led the Diocese of Georgia from 1995 to 2010, passed away peacefully on Dec. 31, the diocese announced. He was 82.

He was born June 13, 1938, in West Palm Beach, Fla. He graduated from the University of the South, and then from Virginia Theological Seminary in 1963. He was ordained as a transitional deacon in 1963 and to the priesthood in 1964.

Louttit had long been interested in liturgical renewal and was involved in the creation of the Book of Common Prayer 1979, according to the archives of the Diocese of Georgia. Louttit served for nearly three decades as rector of Christ Church, Valdosta, before being elected bishop.

During his episcopacy, the diocese took renewed interest in planting new churches, and formed new missions



Photo/Julius Ariail

Bishop Henry I. Louttit Jr. preaches during the Diocese of Georgia's 2009 convention.

in Leesburg, Martinez, Kingsland, Rincon, and Waverly. He retired in 2010.

He is survived by his wife, Jane Arledge Northway, whom he married while in seminary, and by three daughters, Amy, Katie, and Susan. His father, Henry I. Louttit Sr., also was an Episcopal bishop, serving in the former Diocese of South Florida, which has since been divided into three dioceses.

— Diocese of Georgia

## Church launches campaign to aid historically black schools

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry invited Episcopalians to deepen their participation in Christ's ministry of reconciliation by dedicating offerings at observances of the Feast of Absalom Jones (Feb. 13) and making individual donations to support St. Augustine's University in Raleigh, N.C., and Voorhees College in Denmark, S.C., two historically black Episcopal institutions of higher education.

St. Augustine's and Voorhees provide a liberal arts education to thousands of students, the vast majority of whom come from low-income households, and over 40% of whom are the first in their families to attend a four-year college. These schools also provide robust campus ministries which both evangelize and form young adults as followers of Jesus and his way of love.

"In light of the Episcopal Church's renewed covenant and continuing commitment to the work of racial justice and reconciliation I hope you will join me in supporting the Absalom Jones Fund this year," Bishop Curry said.

The two schools were founded in the later 19th century to provide educational opportunities to formerly enslaved persons. "These schools bring educational, economic, and social opportunity to often resource-poor communities, and they offer many blessings into the life of the Episcopal Church," Curry said.

Donations to the HBCUs will help

support scholarships and financial aid for students in need as well as funding for quality facilities, faculty recruitment and retention, and the development of religious life on campus.

### HBCUs with Episcopal roots

Once there were 10 Episcopal HBCUs; however, St. Augustine's and Voorhees are the only two remaining.

Saint Augustine's University (SAU) was founded in 1867 by the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. Its mission is to sustain a learning community in which students can prepare academically, socially and spiritually for leadership in a complex, diverse and rapidly changing world. Over 1,000 students pursue Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees at SAU, while adult learners engage in advanced studies in Criminal Justice, Organizational Management, and Religious Studies.

Voorhees College is a private historically black four-year liberal arts college founded as the Denmark Industrial School by Elizabeth Evelyn Wright, a young black woman, in 1897. Voorhees students today combine intellect and faith as they prepare for professional careers. They learn to thrive in a diverse global society while pursuing life-long learning, healthy living and an abiding faith in God. They aim to improve their communities, society and themselves.

continued on page 5



Jones

### Ely named North Dakota transitional bishop

Bishop Thomas Ely, who led the Diocese of Vermont from 2001 to 2019, has been chosen by the Diocese of North Dakota to serve there part-time — first as an assisting bishop and then, if elected on Feb. 6, as bishop provisional.

The Feb. 6 special convention will be held online in order to vote on his nomination. Ely's service to North Dakota began in January, according to an announcement by the diocese's Standing Committee.

In a letter to the diocese, the committee said that "Bishop Ely is known for his commitment to peace and reconciliation, to interfaith and ecumenical ministry, local ministry development and to global mission."

"Once we have elected Bishop Ely as our transitional bishop provisional, he will serve as our diocese's ecclesiastical authority, sharing ministry with the Diocesan Council and the Standing Committee, coaching us and helping us to discern the possibilities offered by the findings of the Diocesan Discernment Task Force Report that we adopted at our diocesan convention in October. His time with us will be tran-

sitional, not just for the role of bishop in our diocese, but also for all of us.

"Together with Bishop Ely, the Diocesan Council will hire a full-time diocesan minister and administrative assistant, as recommended by the task force report. They will work closely with congregations and with leaders across the diocese to support congregations, invigorate communications, and build an administrative structure to maximize the impact of our ministries and resources."

Ely was ordained a priest in 1980 in Connecticut, where he was born and raised. He holds a bachelor's degree from Western Connecticut State University and a master of divinity from the School of Theology at the University of the South.

Before becoming bishop of Vermont, he served as a missionary in two regional ministry clusters in Connecticut and as Director of Youth Ministries for the Diocese of Connecticut and as executive director of its diocesan camp. He is married to Ann, and they have two daughters and three grandchildren.

— Diocese of North Dakota



Ely



## AROUND THE CHURCH

## Church identifies its priorities as new Congress sworn in

## Office of Government Relations

The Episcopal Church's Washington-based Office of Government Relations issued the following message Jan. 5 on the church's policy priorities for the 117th Congress and incoming Biden administration:

"This new Congress is the most diverse in U.S. history in terms of race and ethnicity, including having a record number of Black and Indigenous women in Congress. There are more women in Congress than at any other time in history, as well as record numbers of the LGBTQ community.

"Members of Congress have their work cut out for them in the coming months. While Congress passed the appropriations and stimulus bill at the end of the year (which the President thankfully signed), many of the benefits in the stimulus bill expire in March. Congress will need to address a dizzying array of domestic concerns and international crises. And

members across the political spectrum will want to take action on the promises they campaigned on, ranging from addressing racial injustice and enacting police reform to ending corruption and bringing back jobs.

"A new Congress and new administration presents the Episcopal Church with the opportunity to highlight our values and to speak up for the way we think our country should be governed. The first 100 days of the presidency do matter and the new administration has an ambitious agenda.

"We will continue to engage on areas where the church has spoken, including:

**"Creation Care:** The Episcopal Church supports policies that protect the natural resources that sustain all life on Earth. In recognition that loving



Photo/David Paulsen/Episcopal News Service

Tourists gather in front of the White House in November 2018.

God and our neighbor includes caring for God's creation and the environment where our neighbor lives, OGR advocates for policies that protect the natural world and that promote a healthy, clean, and safe environment for all. Our advocacy includes greenhouse gas emission reduction, a just transition away from fossil fuel energy, and safeguards to protect clean water and clean air.

**"Racial Reconciliation:** OGR challenges long-established policies that perpetuate systemic racism and injustice and strives to change legislation that continues to harm Black and Indigenous communities and other communities of color. The Episcopal Church aims to bring a perspective of transformation to public policy to heal communities that have been the most marginalized and discriminated against.

**"Ending Poverty:** OGR advocates for

policies that will eliminate poverty and help people live with dignity, both in the U.S. and internationally. OGR advocates for federal programs that provide development assistance and humanitarian relief, including education and healthcare initiatives, as well as support for social safety net programs, care for veterans, and other U.S.-focused anti-poverty initiatives.

**"Immigration and Refugees:** We advocate for comprehensive immigration reform through policies that respect the dignity and worth of every human being. OGR works to protect the human rights and safety of refugees by supporting the refugee resettlement work of Episcopal Migration Ministries and advocating for robust refugee resettlement policies.

**"Human Rights and Peacebuilding:** The church supports legislation and policies that protect human rights and prevent atrocities, promote gender justice, and build peace. OGR partners with non-U.S. Episcopal dioceses and provinces throughout the Anglican Communion to work towards justice.

"We will also push for an ambitious response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including accelerating vaccination for the most vulnerable and helping to encourage the general public to take the vaccine following guidance from public health experts." ■

## MANY continued from page 4

ting through the vitriol, listening deeply, and growing authentic relationships across difference," the Rev. Stephanie Spellers, the presiding bishop's canon for evangelism, reconciliation and stewardship of creation, told ENS.

"From Many, One' won't solve the problems in our broken common life, but it's one concrete way for each of us to practice the ministry of reconciliation that Jesus gave us all. I know I want help making that commitment right now," she said.

Conversation partners can be anyone in a person's social circle, from relatives to co-workers – "many of them are eager for respectful, mutual conversation," the guide says. Although the conversations are intended for individuals, congregations may choose to host events that encourage the practice, such as Zoom meetings with breakout rooms for the one-on-one talks.

"We all are wonderfully and diversely made in God's image," the Rev. Shannon Kelly, the church's director of faith formation, told ENS. "Engaging in conver-

sation with someone who differs from us on any topic, hearing their experiences and sharing your own understanding is one way to start to build relationships and break down the walls between us."

After completing these conversations, participants then are asked to pray for their conversation partners and, if they wish, to share the story of their experiences online through the "From Many, One" campaign.

"We hope people understand this is only scratching the surface of the practice and learning we're called toward," the Rev. Melanie Mullen, the church's director of Reconciliation, Justice and Creation Care, said in the news release. "Our goal is to point people toward partner efforts that meet you where you are: for more simple conversation, further learning, deeper reckoning and/or action. More than that, we hope people see this as part of a life-long commitment to creating beloved community."

The initial phase of the campaign will build to an Easter celebration, with a special online worship service and additional opportunities for participants to discuss their experiences. ■

## JONES continued from page 4

The Absalom Jones Fund for HBCUs has established a text that can receive donations: GIVEHBCU to 41444 (standard messaging and data rates apply).

For more information, or if a parish or diocese would like to dedicate a collection to the Absalom Jones Offering, contact Cecilia Malm, senior development officer, at cmalm@episcopalchurch.org, 212-716-6062.

## Absalom Jones

Absalom Jones was an African American abolitionist and clergyman and the first African American ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church. Absalom Jones

was born enslaved to Abraham Wynkoop in 1746 in Delaware. Jones moved to Philadelphia after his master sold his plantation along with Absalom's mother and six siblings. Jones bought his wife Mary's freedom and later his master granted Absalom's emancipation in 1784.

In 1787, with his friend Richard Allen, they founded the Free African Society, a mutual aid benevolent organization that was the first of its kind organized by and for black people. Bishop William White ordained Jones a deacon in 1795 and a priest in 1802. Jones served the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia, a church which remains a vibrant congregation.

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

75 years ago, "Fr. Bob" Mize Jr. founded a ministry of redemption and hope. Unwilling to simply "write off" troubled boys, he chose to help them redeem their self-worth and imagine lives of purpose.

What began as St. Francis Boys' Home, with a handful of employees in Ellsworth, Kansas, is now Saint Francis Ministries, serving thousands of children and families in multiple U.S. states. Today, our committed and compassionate employees provide a wide range of social, therapeutic, and residential services to those most in need of **healing and hope.**

To support this life-affirming work, visit <https://saintfrancisministries.org/foundation/>

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# Bishops warn about 'epidemic of gun violence'

## Episcopal News Service

*Bishops United Against Gun Violence, a network of more than 100 Episcopal bishops, released the following statement on Jan. 15 about the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol and the threat of additional violence tied to President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on Jan. 20.*

Dear People of God in the Episcopal Church,

Last week, those of us in the United States watched in horror as a violent insurrection put both our government and its leaders in peril. This week, our nation sits on edge, waiting to learn if extremists will make good on threats to mount armed protests at all 50 state capitol buildings and in Washington D.C. between now and Inauguration Day.

The epidemic of gun violence in our



country now threatens not just individual Americans, but also our democracy.

The new administration and many members of the 117th Congress have pledged, as we have done, to support sensible gun reform, and we look forward to working with elected leaders of both political parties to bring about meaningful change in our nation's gun laws. But changing laws will not be enough.

In these fraught times, we ask Episcopalians of all political persuasions to join us in doing three things:

Pray for those who died in [the Jan. 6] siege at the U.S. Capitol and all those who endured it and will live forever with

traumatic memories. Pray, too, for all those who may be threatened with mob violence in the coming days, and for the law enforcement officials who are seeking to protect our democracy.

Ask your elected officials to hold accountable those who use the threat of gun violence as a means to overturn our democracy or subvert the results of an election. Ask them, too, to ban guns from state government buildings, polling places, and all locations where people participate in civic life.

Work with leaders in your community to end our country's longstanding racial disparities in policing, made plain by the contrast in enforcement tactics used in this summer's protests for racial justice and those used at last week's violent insurrection.

May God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, grant us courage for the days ahead.

Faithfully,

Bishops United Against Gun Violence

## Curry joins Christian leaders in call for Trump's removal

### Episcopal News Service

*Presiding Bishop Michael Curry added his name Jan. 8 to an open letter addressed to Vice President Mike Pence, members of Congress and the U.S. Cabinet, calling for the removal of President Donald Trump from office. The full letter, distributed by the National Council of Churches, follows:*

January 8, 2021

Our faith instructs us to take seriously positions of leadership, not to lead others astray and to be careful about what we say and do. In Philippians 2:3-4 we are taught to, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others."

President Donald J. Trump's actions and words have endangered the security of the country and its institutions of government by inciting a violent, deadly, seditious mob attack at the U.S. Capitol.

His words and actions have placed the lives of the people he is supposed to serve in grave danger to advance his own interests. Further, he not only failed to stop or condemn the attack after the Capitol had been stormed but instead encouraged the mob by calling them patriots.

way those peacefully protesting the oppression of Black Americans just a few months ago were rounded up in unmarked vans in the dark of night," the Diocese of Maryland's Truth and Reconciliation Commission wrote. "We saw white privilege on full and shameful display yesterday, and for those people who keep saying, 'This is not who we are!' we reply: 'We' is a broad category, and yes, this IS who some of us are."

"We saw some members of law enforcement treating insurrectionists as nonviolent protestors, while just months before we saw nonviolent protestors being treated like insurrectionists," Wright, the bishop of Atlanta, wrote.

Some specifically decried the use of Christian imagery that was deployed during the assault on the Capitol.

"As Christians, perhaps the most horrifying image of yesterday's planned and successfully executed chaos was the huge cross that some had lofted and waved

This domestic terrorist attack resulted in at least five deaths, including a Capitol Police officer, and more than a dozen police officers injured. The desecration of the Capitol building was also disgraceful and reprehensible.

For the good of the nation, so that we might end the current horror and prepare the way for binding up the nation's wounds, we, as leaders of the member communions of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC), believe the time has come for the President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, to resign his position immediately. If he is unwilling to resign, we urge you to exercise the options provided by our democratic system.

In addition, we recognize the need to hold responsible not only those who invaded the Capitol, but also those who supported and/or promoted the President's false claims about the election, or made their own false accusations.

We grieve for our country at this difficult time and continue to pray for the safety and security, and ultimately the healing of our nation. Holding those who have abused their power and participated in these immoral and tragic actions, in particular the President of the United States, is one step toward healing. ■

repeatedly in the midst of the mob," the Diocese of Maryland's Truth and Reconciliation Commission wrote. "The politically motivated darkness perpetrated on our country on the Feast of the Epiphany, no less, must never be confused with anything to do with the ministry and commission of Jesus Christ to all the baptized."

Some dioceses directed their members toward action. The Diocese of Michigan, in addition to hosting its own prayer vigil for the nation, encouraged its members to "continue the vigil" by contacting their local, state and federal representatives. Stokes called on those in the Diocese of New Jersey to observe Jan. 8 as a "day of lamentation, fasting and prayer," offering the Daily Office on Zoom and Facebook.

Western Massachusetts Bishop Douglas Fisher told his diocese that as painful as Jan. 6 was — "It felt like death," he said — there is still cause for hope, and the Christian mission is more important than ever. ■

### CAPITOL continued from page 1

the cathedral's altar, saying "there is nothing Christian about what we are witnessing today."

"Mr. President, there has been no fraudulent election," Budde said. "You called your supporters to our Capitol. You fed their wild fantasies and conspiracy theories. You whipped them into a frenzy. This is not acceptable."

Some bishops also denounced the political leaders who are now distancing themselves from Trump after supporting and enabling his attacks on a democratic election and encouragement of political violence.

Atlanta Bishop Rob Wright observed



*From left, Washington Bishop Mariann Budde, Washington Cathedral Dean Randy Hollerith and Rabbi Bruce Lustig, senior rabbi of Washington Hebrew Congregation speak in a video recorded at Washington National Cathedral.*

that "some who have enabled inflammatory rhetoric for professional gain, now uncharacteristically called for restraint and calm. But you cannot be an arsonist for years and then say you are suddenly a firefighter. Words matter. Civility matters. Facts matter. The rule of law matters. Justice matters.

"What we saw yesterday was the reaping of what has been sown in our politics for too long. A constant diet of contempt and falsehoods are dangerous and fast-acting corrosives to our democracy, and we are made for more than that."

Michigan Bishop Bonnie Perry also noted that the crisis was not an isolated instance of violence by a few people but a widespread embrace of dangerous lies.

"Last night, our country did more than stumble, we did more than fall," Perry wrote. "Thousands of people in our

country ran off the ramparts and crashed into a moat of chaos because leaders in our government at the highest level, our president and some members of Congress, have insisted upon perpetuating a myth of widespread voter fraud. Those lies, either the perpetuation of them or the tacit acceptance of them, [have] caused a vast swath of our country to now doubt the very means by which we make changes to our policies and laws. A vast swath of our country doubts our ability to hold fair elections.

"This belief is simply not true," she continued. "What are we, people of faith, Christians, patriots to do? Speak the truth. Hear the truth."

Some statements emphasized the idea that the language we use to describe such events matters.

"It is dreadful that few, if any, of those who used their words to encourage this violence have not expressed any regret or remorse for using language that incited these lawbreakers," Central Florida Bishop Greg Brewer said in written statement. "They, too, should be held

accountable."

New Jersey Bishop William Stokes called the attack on the Capitol "grievous and evil," adding it should be condemned in the strongest terms without equivocation.

"It was an attack on this country's democracy by terrorists bent on overturning a legitimate democratic election," Stokes said. "A nation already suffering from the devastation of a worldwide pandemic, as well as the historic disease of racism, has now been further damaged by yesterday's coup attempt."

Some pointed out the discrepancies in the treatment of the Jan. 6 terrorists and Black Lives Matter protesters last summer, calling it an example of white privilege.

"This angry and mostly white group of insurrectionists largely departed the Capitol freely, in stark contrast to the



## NEWS

# Biden presidency spurs renewed optimism for immigration advocacy

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

President Donald Trump spent his four years in office targeting both legal and illegal immigration on multiple fronts. Critics condemned his administration's hardline policies as cruel and xenophobic, while Episcopal leaders joined ecumenical partners in arguing the country was failing to live up to Christian and American values.

President-elect Joe Biden has vowed to roll back many of Trump's policies, raising hopes among immigration advocates of a more humane approach to the issues. Experts have noted that Biden's authority to change immigration policies, though significant, is not unlimited.

The Episcopal Church's General Convention has long endorsed reforms that promote compassion and support for migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. During the Trump administration, the church stepped up its advocacy, including through the work of the church's Washington-based Office of Government Relations. The agency on Jan. 5 included immigration on its list of priorities for the new Congress and White House.

"The Office of Government Relations will do all we can to push for the 117th Congress and the new administration to enact meaningful immigration reform," Director Rebecca Blachly said in a statement to Episcopal News Service. The church "will continue to advocate for a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, many of whom have U.S. citizen family members. As always, we will partner in our advocacy with religious and secular groups across the political spectrum with whom we share common goals."

Biden can immediately reverse some policies through executive action, such as ending Trump's ban on travel to the United States from several Muslim-majority nations and strengthening protection for undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. More comprehensive immigration reform may take time because it requires bipartisan legislative action in Congress.

Episcopal News Service reported frequently on the church's responses to the Trump administration's immigration actions. The following is an overview of some of the key policies, possible changes under the incoming Biden administration and Episcopal leaders' outlook for church advocacy.

## Refugee resettlement

Few aspects of immigration policy are poised for a reversal as dramatic as the shift on refugee resettlement. Presidents set the ceiling, or maximum number, for refugees to be resettled in the United States each year. Trump slashed that number in his term to a historic low of 15,000 this fiscal year. Biden has said he will increase it to 125,000 — one of the highest annual limits since the program was created in 1980 under President Jimmy Carter.



Photo/Lynette Wilson/ENS

*The Rev. Rodger Babnew, a deacon serving St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Nogales, Ariz., and a co-convenor of Cruzando Fronteras, a Diocese of Arizona border ministry, leads 2019 Border Ministries Summit attendees on tour in Nogales.*

Episcopal Migration Ministries, or EMM, is one of nine agencies with contracts to facilitate resettlement on behalf of the State Department. The number of local affiliates that EMM works with dwindled from 31 to 12 under Trump. Refugee resettlement operations in the U.S. aren't expected to return quickly to previous levels, but EMM "looks forward to 2021 with optimism," Director of Operations Demetrio Alvero said in a statement to ENS.

EMM will begin planning its response to an increase in refugee resettlement under Biden by coordinating with affiliates, congregations and communities. "The process of bringing back capacity in the resettlement program to the levels seen in prior years will take time, effort, and will be contingent on funding," Alvero said. "Building back will be a gradual, measured process. It won't happen overnight."

The Rev. Charles Robertson, the canon to the presiding bishop for ministry beyond The Episcopal Church, said EMM remains central to the church's work on immigration. The agency "not only resettles refugees in partnership with the U.S. government," Robertson told ENS, but "also supports asylum-seekers and immigrants in detention through ministry networks, addresses the crisis on the border and looks at broader migration issues throughout the Anglican Communion."

## Asylum-seekers and 'remain in Mexico'

The Trump administration pursued policies making it more difficult for asylum cases to be heard, including the "remain in Mexico" policy, which blocks migrants on the southern U.S. border from waiting in the United States while their cases are pending. Biden said last month that he will reverse the Trump administration's policies on asylum — but at a cautious pace, to prevent a sudden surge of migrants on the border.

The Episcopal dioceses along the southern border have prioritized ministries of support for asylum-seekers in recent years. The Rev. Lee Curtis, canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of the Rio Grande, told ENS he was encouraged by

Biden's careful and deliberate approach to reversing Trump's policies.

"The last few years, policy changes come down pretty much unannounced and not really planned for," said Curtis, whose diocese in New Mexico and western Texas spans 40% of the southern U.S. border. A sudden end to "remain in Mexico" could overload the capacity of relief efforts as asylum-seekers rush to cross the border.

Instead, a gradual policy shift would allow diocesan leaders and their non-profit partners time to plan for providing temporary shelter and travel assistance to asylum-seekers, while coordinating with

federal agencies and elected officials — "so we can treat this like the humanitarian crisis that it is," Curtis said.

## Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA

DACA was established under President Barack Obama in 2012 to protect from deportation about 800,000 people who were brought to the United States illegally as children. Trump moved in 2017 to terminate DACA, arguing the recipients' legal residency status needs to be addressed by legislation, not executive action. Last year, a U.S. Supreme Court ruling limited Trump's efforts but left the program's fate in legal limbo. A new federal ruling from a court in Texas could come at any time.

Biden could restore some short-term security for those individuals while Congress weighs a long-term solution. DACA, though not a path to citizenship, allowed recipients to work in the United States if they met certain criteria.

Last year, the Office of Government Relations, working with EMM, coordinated virtual action days and meetings with staff members in the offices of more than a dozen U.S. senators, urging passage of DREAM Act legislation or compromise measures that would preserve protections for DACA recipients. Such advocacy will continue this year, even if Biden restores DACA protections by executive action.

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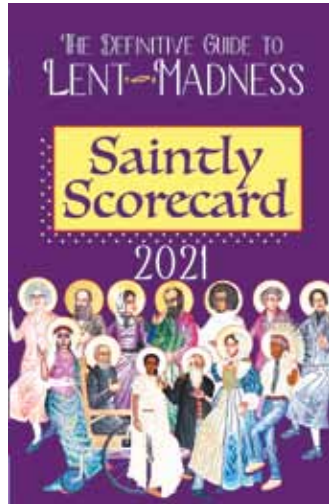
## LENT RESOURCES

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, marks the beginning of Lent, 40 days of repentance and reflection that leads to Easter on April 4. Here is a selection of resources intended to enrich congregational or individual prayer and meditation during Lent.

### Forward Movement

This Lenten season, Forward Movement is offering a variety of tools for spiritual engagement including calendars, books, and online courses. A creative approach to the 40 days of Lent is available with the colorable “Join the Journey Through Lent” calendar, illustrated by Jay Sidebotham.

Game fans can join the saintly fun and learn more about the holy people who have gone before us with Lent Madness, which features March Madness-style matchups and daily voting.



For daily reflection, consider “A Spring in the Desert: Rediscovering the Water of Life in Lent,” by Frank and Victoria Logue. The book is also available as a five-part Church-Next course. Both the printed book and online course can serve as guides through Lent for individuals, Bible studies, or congregations.

The complete Forward Movement interactive e-Catalog for Lent is at [forwardmovement.org/lent2021](http://forwardmovement.org/lent2021).

### Episcopal Relief & Development

In response to the unprecedented events of the past year, Episcopal Relief & Development’s 2021 Lenten Meditations share deeply personal reflections on the theme of lament from a diverse group of writers. Many of the authors share experiences related to a variety of issues including disease, violence, racial injustice and poverty.

Participants are invited to meditate on these reflections daily and to engage the “Four Steps of Lament,” by resting, reflecting, repenting and ultimately being restored to God and to one another. Download the 2021 Lenten Meditations in English or Spanish at [episcopalrelief.org/lent](http://episcopalrelief.org/lent). Please note that this year’s meditations are only available online.

### Revive Lent

For lay leaders during Lent, the spiritual formation program Revive has released Revive Lent, a small group opportunity that draws on the original Revive program, with some fresh material created specifically for Lent.

The downloadable program may be run online or in places where small in-person groups are permitted, following recommended health and safety protocols. Now through Ash Wednesday, Forward Movement is offering the complete Revive video small-group series, including the Revive Lent supplemental materials, for \$50. Free optional training orientation sessions for facilitators will be offered Feb. 2, 3 and 4.

The program is accompanied by optional short



video introductions narrated by the Rev. Dawn Davis, who created it as a gift of thanks for the ministry of lay people in her Canadian parish. She is currently assistant professor in the Faculty of Theology at Huron University, part of the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario.

Revive equips lay people to be confident spiritual leaders. Drawing on Catholic and Evangelical traditions, from scripture to early church writers through to contemporary spiritual writers, Revive helps people to connect more deeply with the God they love.

Learn more at [revive.forwardmovement.org/revive-lent](http://revive.forwardmovement.org/revive-lent).

### St. Michael’s, Austin, Texas

St. Michael’s Church in Austin, Texas, presents a virtual Lenten speaker series called “God + Grace + Hope Amid the Pandemic.” The series will feature five Episcopal clergy who will each offer a brief video message rooted in hope, truth, grace, perspective and grounded in the Christian gospel.

The videos will be posted each Sunday in Lent on the St. Michael’s website ([www.st-michaels.org](http://www.st-michaels.org)) and also sent to the church’s email list. On the following Tuesdays, St. Michael’s rector, the Rev. John Newton, will host the Sunday guest speaker on his podcast, “Calm Words for Anxious Hearts.” The podcasts will be available online and sent via email to subscribers.

### Virginia Theological Seminary

Virginia Theological Seminary is producing “Stations of the Cross,” a 30-minute video of this liturgy with original music and new images by artist Margaret Parker. It is designed for use by individuals, groups, and parishes during Lent. It will be available at no cost in early February. Visit the VTS Lifelong Learning website for details: <https://www.vts.edu/lifelong-learning>.

### Society of St. John the Evangelist

This Massachusetts-based monastic community invites participants to its online Lenten program, called “Come, Pray - The Prayer I Need This Day: Lent 2021.”

After a year in which churches have been closed and congregations scattered, the SSJE brothers are offering the daily gift of prayer. During Lent, the brothers will discuss the rich and varied ways we pray, together in church and in our personal prayer.

The series is centered on a weekly 20-minute video and invites participants to explore and experience diverse prayer practices alongside the brothers through joining regular, live-streamed worship, special services, and online teachings.

To sign up for the weekly email: [SSJE.org/](http://SSJE.org/)



subscribe and select “Monastic Wisdom for everyday living.” If a participant is already subscribed to the brothers’ email, there is no need to re-subscribe.

### Community of the Gospel

The Community of the Gospel, an ecumenical non-residential monastic community with standing in the Episcopal Church, will offer “Lectio in Lent,” an online Bible study that takes place Feb. 27 from noon to 1 p.m., EST. Using the ancient monastic method of praying the Scriptures, participants will deepen their paschal journeys by focusing on several texts traditionally associated with Lent.

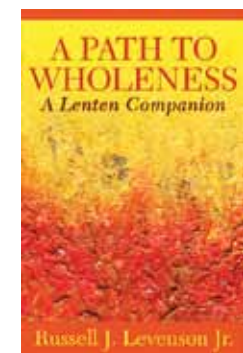
The event is free of charge. Additional information may be obtained from Br. Daniel-Chad Hoffman, Community of the Gospel guardian, at [danhoffma@gmail.com](mailto:danhoffma@gmail.com) or at [www.communityofthegospel.org](http://www.communityofthegospel.org).

### Church Publishing

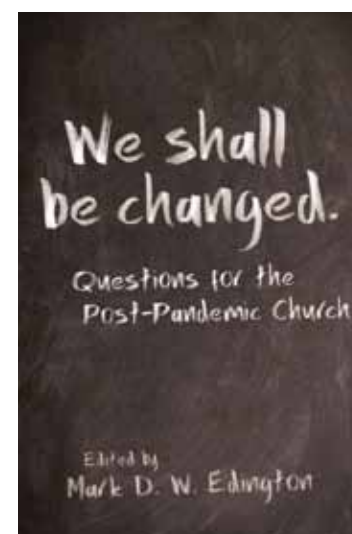
Church Publishing Group is offering a 25% on Lent and Easter resources, ending on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 17.)

New for 2021 is the book, “A Path to Wholeness: A Lenten Companion” by the Rev. Russell J. Levenson, Jr., an invitation to Lenten observance through Biblical passages and reflections.

This book, focusing on Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, is part of a four-part series on seasonal observances and devotions. It was written as an avenue towards deepening, strengthening, and for some, beginning a personal relationship with God during the 40 days of Lent.



Another new book, “We Shall Be Changed: Questions for the Post-Pandemic Church” by Bishop Mark D.W. Edington, of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, invites reflection on the question, “How will we regather the church after the pandemic?”



It is a collection of brief essays from thought leaders around the church on pressing topics that the church needs to be considering now — in preparation for the end of this pandemic. The book is designed to spur conversation within parishes, fellowship groups, and clergy gatherings about how to embrace the gifts this time has given while anticipating and addressing the very real challenges the church will confront in its wake. ■



## NEWS

ASHES continued from page 1

“We won’t be doing Ashes to Go out in the community this year,” said Senior Warden Karen Sanchez of Holy Cross, Carlsbad, Calif. “However, we will livestream our service and distribute ashes in Ziploc bags ahead of time to the congregation, for self and family imposition during the liturgy.”

The Minnesota winter cold will not stop St. Clement’s in St. Paul. “We will be having brief outdoor (freezing cold) services with cantors and Ashes to Go in small lip balm containers (pre-filled) for people to take and administer to themselves and those in their household,” the Rev. Joy Cairns reported. “So, no one will be coming close enough for imposition of ashes by anyone not in their bubble.”

“I don’t see how Ashes to Go is not also a high-risk scenario,” said the Rev. Josh Hosler, Good Shepherd, Federal Way, Wash. “We’re working on a plan to distribute ashes in little Ziploc bags in the mail for the purpose of self- and family-imposition during our Zoom liturgy.”

The Diocese of New York has asked all its churches to suspend the practice of imposing ashes, in all forms and manners, as being too risky during the pandemic.

“Some have proposed creative alternatives to the prayer book practice, including the use of Q-tips, ‘puffing’ ashes into people’s faces, sprinkling ashes on heads, or sending ashes home with people. May I say that the point of wearing ashes on Ash Wednesday is not the ashes themselves. It is the broken and contrite heart we present to God,” wrote diocesan Bishop Andrew Dietsche in a letter to the diocese.

“The imposition of ashes in the liturgy, and ‘Ashes to Go’ outside the church, are beloved traditions and practices. We will miss them. But our forbearance from these practices this year must just be counted among all of the countless losses we have experienced during COVID. All of these things and more will be given back to us,” he wrote.

The Rev. Canon Holly Herring, Canon Precentor, Trinity Cathedral, Phoenix, is looking at all angles. “While we have not made our decision about what we will do, there are a couple of things that stand out for me from the BCP, within the context of imposing or not,” she said.

“Not Imposing: ‘If ashes are to be imposed, the Celebrant says the following prayer...’ What about our traditions must we engage, may we engage, should we engage — how do we grieve these changes, embrace these changes, grow from these changes? Imposing: ‘Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.’ What does that look like when you really embrace that (statisti-

cally) it will most likely happen before we gather for ashes again in 2022 — I’ll bury one of them, or they will bury me ... and certainly that will happen to all of us eventually. How do we grieve that reality, embrace that reality, grow from that reality?”

Some are recognizing the loss that will be felt in 2021.

“Maybe a year off from ashes isn’t a bad thing,” noted the Rev. Tim Schenck, St. John The Evangelist, Hingham,



Photo/Elena Tayem via Wikimedia Commons

**The Rev. Andrew Sherman, right, and the Rev. Craig Burlington of St. Gregory’s Episcopal Church in Boca Raton, Fla., distribute “ashes to go” in Mizner Park on Ash Wednesday 2017.**

Mass. “This may be an opportunity to recapture the reason for Ash Wednesday, a time to truly rend our hearts as we enter into Lent.”

“I know for me and many clergy, Ash Wednesday is one of my spiritually/pastorally moving services of the year,” said the Rev. Gillian R. Barr, Calvary, Stonington, Conn. “But in a year when we’ve already forgone Holy Week, Easter, and the whole Christmas cycle, it’s just another loss.”

“I’ve done Ashes to Go at our local train station for years. There have been years it’s been almost unbearably cold, years it’s been rainy, and years when I’ve wondered why I bothered with my coat, but it’s always, always been an uplifting experience,” said Patricia Arlin Bradley of Holy Trinity, Hillsdale, and chief business officer at St. Peter’s in Morristown, N.J.

“I will miss it this year. I’ll also miss our parish’s traditional Ash Wednesday pizza party. Yes, we order pizzas for after our 7 p.m. service, because many of us come straight from work. Feed the soul, nourish the body, bring the kids. A little unorthodox, but we love it. Next year, God willing,” Bradley said.

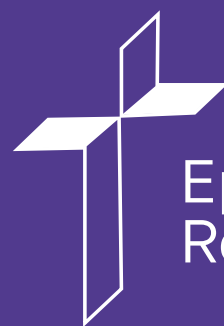
And what about the traditional Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner?

“Sadly, I do not see how any of those traditions — the pancake supper, Ashes to Go, or even the imposition of ashes, can happen this year,” said the Rev. Diana Wilcox, Christ Church in Bloomfield and Glen Ridge, N.J.

Caron agreed. “Ash Wednesday is important, but pancakes, while traditional and a great social occasion, are not.” ■

*Neva Rae Fox writes about issues of faith. This article originally appeared in The Living Church with additional material by Episcopal Journal.*

## Episcopal Relief & Development invites you to join us this Lent



Episcopal  
Relief & Development

Download Lenten Meditations  
in English and Spanish at  
[www.episcopalrelief.org/Lent](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/Lent)



## FEATURE

# Pandemic exacerbates clergy stress

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald  
*The Living Church*

Having led spiritual direction with priests in crisis since 1998, the Rev. Ed Cardoza has helped clerics navigate the deep personal impacts of many catastrophes, from the 9/11 terror attacks to the 2010 Haiti earthquake. Ten months into the COVID-19 pandemic, he said the state of clergy mental health is the worst he's ever seen.

"This is the first time I've heard clergy folks say, 'I'm really thinking about ending my life,'" said Cardoza, co-founder of Still Harbor, a nonprofit with spiritual direction services based in Arlington, Mass. Since March, about 20 percent of his clients have expressed "strong suicidal ideation." Another third was not thinking about leaving ministry until 2020, but now sees no other option.

"I have noticed a profound lack of joy in priests," said Cardoza, who works largely with Episcopal clergy and finds them wounded by the inability to be present with their flocks. "If you're not filled with joy and the energy of community, then no wonder you're thinking about: 'Maybe it's time for me to pack it in.'"

Social isolation, tough circumstances within clergy families, frustration-fueled conflict in parishes, nervous church budgeting for 2021 — all of it together makes the pandemic status quo feel unsustainable for growing numbers of men and women of the cloth, as Cardoza has learned.

Tragedy has underscored how worst-case scenarios aren't merely hypothetical. In May, Charleston, S.C., megachurch pastor Darrin Patrick drew national attention to clergy vulnerability when he ended his life. Then in September, 30-year-old Episcopal priest Melissa Kean also took her own life, according to a statement from Bishop of Colorado Kimberly Lucas, who used the moment to urge anyone suffering from mental health woes to get help.

"In this time," Lucas said, "where many of us are dealing with competing demands and the emotional, spiritual, and mental toll of social isolation... I encourage you: speak to someone. Reach out."

As a group battered by the effects of pandemic stress, clergy have plenty of company. In the 2020 Stress in America Report, the American Psychological Association finds that 78 percent of Americans say the pandemic is a significant source of stress in their lives. What's more, 67 percent say their stress has increased as the pandemic has worn on.

Cumulative and intensifying stressors are now wearing clergy in particular ways, even though many have adapted at least somewhat to online worship, pastoral care via Zoom, and other innovations. Surveys taken both ecumenically and inside denominations point to a worsening mental health situation that's leading dioceses to make more supports

available.

Among the findings:

- In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, about 16 percent of church workers were treated for mental health disorders such as major depression or anxiety during the first half of 2020. That's up 6.1 percent from the same period a year earlier.

- Twenty percent of Protestant clergy rate their mental and emotional well-being as below average or poor, according to a national survey in August by the Barna Group. That was up pointedly from 11 percent in April and two percent in December 2015.

- Among Roman Catholic priests, 62 percent said their morale has been impacted somewhat or very much by the pandemic, according to a May-June survey by Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. Eighty percent said they see the pandemic impacting the morale of priests in their dioceses.

- In August, 64 percent of United Church of Christ (UCC) clergy were judged to be doing fair or poor in terms of mental health, according to survey results from regional conference staff in 12 geographic areas.

"I know from my research that the poorer mental health comes from being isolated, feeling alone, feeling like there's no hope and no support," said Sarah Griffith Lund, the UCC's Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice, and author of "Blessed Are the Crazy: Breaking the Silence about Mental Illness, Family and Church."

"Having a community of practice [bringing clergy peers together] will remind people we're not alone, we're not isolated, there is hope and we do have support," Lund said.

The pandemic is making it hard for clergy to renew themselves and be effective. Although many are experienced in ministering in crises, they're usually not going through the disaster themselves while also trying to help others cope with extreme stress.

Yet that's what's needed this time — not just for the sprint last spring, but also for what's become a marathon without mileage markers and no end in sight, according to Jeff Thiemann, President and CEO of Portico Benefit Services, which manages health claims for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) 11,000 affiliated workers.

"People aren't taking time to rest," Thiemann said, "but one thing we do know is that we cannot run this marathon on adrenaline alone. Adrenaline got us online, and adrenaline got us through Easter, but boy, Easter feels a long way away."

Laypeople can inadvertently com-

pound their clergy's mental health woes. In settings where conflict has lingered unresolved, for instance, clergy are increasingly being scapegoated or viewed with heightened distrust, Thiemann said.

"I've heard clergy talk about... a lack of trust within the congregation that the pastor is actually working because they don't see [the pastor] visible in the way

though still fatigued at times. He credits his reinvigoration of several routines, especially his 20-year daily habit of saying morning and evening prayer, which he says keeps him grounded. As an added bonus, a few parishioners now join him for morning prayer online each day.

"I reminded myself," Drymon said, "what those great ascetical theologians of old, like Teresa of Avila and John of

the Cross, talked about. Just keeping at it, even if you are in a period of spiritual aridity or coming into a dark night. I found that over a period of six weeks, I was able not only to stop the tide of a negative outcome for my own mental and spiritual health, but really come out the other side a bit stronger and more energized."

Dr. Lund, the UCC officer, manages her own pandemic stressors in her role as senior minister at First Congregational Church. She is in recovery from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), she said, but hasn't been notably hampered by that condition this year. She says she is doing "very well," which she attributes to what she calls

"wellness practices." She sees a therapist, maintains friendships, and sustains routines to regulate healthy eating, exercise and sleep.

"I've found that people who had pre-existing mental health conditions and had a method of support in place are doing better [in the pandemic] than people who are not accustomed to addressing mental health challenges," Lund said.

To stay mentally healthy, clergy are supplementing individual disciplines with group engagement. In Southern Massachusetts, they're learning to rely on peers to make sure they're doing OK and keeping up with self-care, according to Canon for the Southern Massachusetts region Kelly O'Connell.

In one of her four deaneries, clergy have gone from meeting monthly, pre-pandemic, to gathering weekly now on Zoom. Efforts are also underway to make sure every clergyperson in the Diocese of Massachusetts is part of a peer support group.

"I do worry about their burnout, I guess, more than anything," said Bishop Carol Gallagher, canon for the Central region of the Diocese of Massachusetts. "We've had a couple [of priests] inquire about taking leave for mental health reasons. I do think there's a rise in that. But I'm actually pretty positively amazed at how creative people are being in the midst of all of this." ■

*The article was first published in The Living Church.*



Photo/Timothy Eberly/unsplash.com

**‘A lot of it was the stress of trying to reinvent the wheel. ... It was a lot of extra hours leading to fatigue and irritability.’**

— The Rev. John Drymon

that they saw them before," Thiemann said. "They're asking for documentation to show me that you're actually working full-time. Meanwhile a lot of [pastors] are putting in way more time and energy than they did before to adapt to the new way of doing this."

Working extra pandemic hours is a story familiar to the Rev. John Drymon, rector of Trinity Church in Findlay, Ohio. Pre-pandemic, he used to lead two Sunday services in person. Now he leads three in order to allow for sufficient social distancing at each. But that's not all; he also pre-records a fourth service which he then edits and posts on Facebook and YouTube.

Pandemic stress has at times stirred up the chronic anxiety that Drymon says he manages with a combination of medication, psychotherapy, and spiritual direction. The pace of pandemic ministry has been "exhausting," he said, but he's taking only half the vacation time he's earned this year because the demands of ministry have kept him mostly at work.

He was working last August when he finally felt himself "coming up on hitting a brick wall," he recalled. "A lot of it was the stress of trying to reinvent the wheel" and do ministry without physical presence with parishioners, Drymon said. "It was a lot of extra hours leading to fatigue and irritability."

He recognized his irritability for what it was — a mental health warning sign — and pivoted to re-commit to healthy habits. He's feeling better now, he says,



## FEATURE

# Episcopal-led mentors, tutors continue to serve Georgia students online

By Michelle Hiskey  
Episcopal News Service

In a typical year, mentors in a program called Path to Shine gradually build trust to support the educational growth of elementary school students who live in poverty across Georgia. In 2020, as the pandemic abruptly destabilized students' lives, the mentors and tutors have scrambled to sustain these relationships.

"COVID messed everything up," said Path to Shine volunteer mentor Lindy Newman, a retired second grade teacher and member of Holy Trinity Parish in Decatur.

Founded in 2010 by the Rev. Lesley-Ann Drake, a deacon, and based at St. Benedict's in Smyrna, Path to Shine volunteer mentors and tutors have logged more than 50,000 hours working one on one with students in its after-school programs, which have spread to 17 locations across the northern half of the state, from Pulaski County in central Georgia to Cherokee County, a suburb of Atlanta.

Early in the pandemic when Georgia suspended in-school learning, Path to Shine shifted online. Even as public schools across the state have reopened, mentoring and tutoring have continued online since volunteers tend to be older and at a higher risk for COVID-19.

The initial shift created a challenge

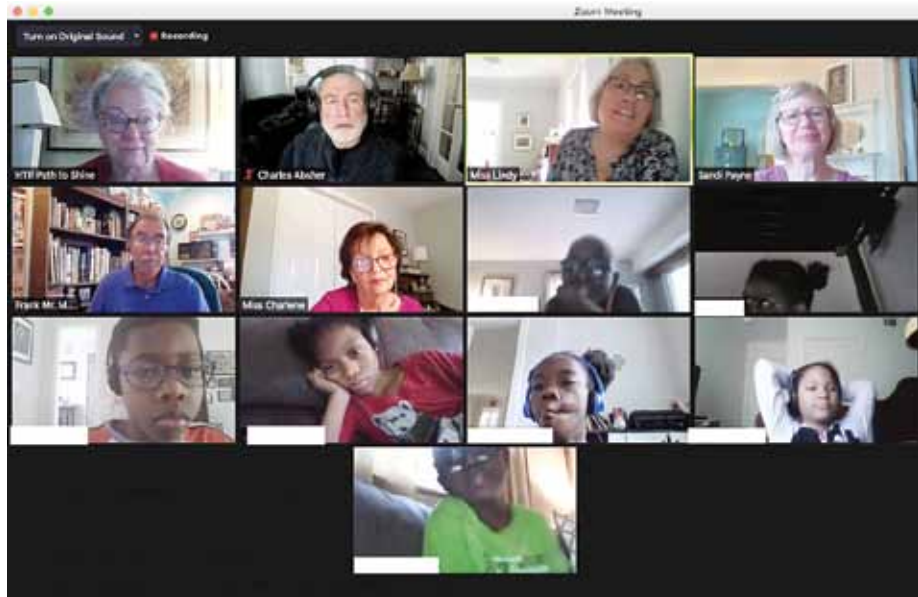
for Drake, just days after she was honored by state legislators with a servant leadership award. She had founded Path to Shine without a background in education, and the pandemic required additional faith and resources.

"What I truly believe is that if I can do this, anyone can do anything if you are willing to shut up and listen and ask for help," she said. "God provides resources you don't have."

### Children's support at stake

In Georgia, 1 in 5 children live in poverty, putting them at an educational disadvantage and limiting their access to health and social services. Path to Shine volunteers typically work one on one with students in weekly 2.5-hour after-school sessions that include tutoring, games and field trips.

Bridging differences one on one "makes the kingdom of God alive and vibrant," said Atlanta Bishop Rob Wright during a 10th anniversary online celebration of Path to Shine, which also is a Ju-



Path to Shine mentors meet with students in a recent Zoom video call.

Screenshot/Charles Absher

bilee ministry — the Episcopal Church's network of poverty-focused ministries.

Early in the pandemic, Drake and other community-based ministry leaders met with Wright, who encouraged them to "lean into" the pandemic and its isolating challenges. No matter how much their spheres of influence may have shrunk, they needed to strive to always "be the church," Drake recalled him saying.

For Path to Shine mentors, "leaning in" has meant modeling the trust and commitment they teach and making an effort to maintain contact with the students.

"The most important thing we can do is maintain relationships," Drake told mentors. "A lot of the students and families don't have [landline] phones, so you send a card or letter and enclose a stamped envelope so the child can send a letter back to you."

Second, recognizing that students in poverty often go hungry, the mentors delivered grocery cards. "Students rely on school for food," Drake said. The next delivery was a bag of puzzles, games and bingo — everything that a student would need as Zoom mentoring began.

### Troubleshooting at a distance

Path to Shine's board set aside \$32,000 specifically to address pandemic-related needs. Drake worked with other nonprofits to provide Wi-Fi hotspots, computers and earphones for students in need.

Not every relationship was saved, though. Newman lost touch with a stu-

dent she had worked with for five years.

"He wasn't responding to calls, so I knocked on his door and I could hear their dogs yipping and yapping, but no one answered," she said. "We want to keep the mentoring open all the way through his schooling — if we can get back together."

At first, Path to Shine volunteers found online meetings with children ages 5 to 11 to be a

challenge, and Newman, who before the pandemic taught at an online charter school, offered them advice on how to engage students on screen.

Her husband Charles Absher, also a longtime volunteer, took easily to distance mentoring.

"It's a little less stressful online," said Absher, a musician who composes a new song for his students each week. One reason he volunteers, he said, is that he believes turning away someone in need is like turning away Christ.

### Mentoring matters

As COVID-19 continued to spread in Georgia in October, the organization celebrated its 10th anniversary, during which Path to Shine's first graduate told his story. Eloy Meza, 18, earned scholarships to attend nearby Kennesaw State University and plans to transfer to Georgia Tech for his degree in software engineering.

As an elementary student, though, he was as lost as "a confused puppy," he said. He was matched with a Path to Shine mentor who helped him envision the future, set goals and answer questions about attending college as a first-generation student.

"I really just needed guidance," Meza said at the online event. Mentoring "helped me find that guidance and established that confidence in me." ■

Michelle Hiskey is a freelance writer based in Decatur, Ga., and a member of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Atlanta.

## Pension group launches 'Choose Well' podcast

### Church Pension Group

The Church Pension Group (CPG), a financial services organization that serves the Episcopal Church, has launched "Choose Well," a new podcast series featuring interviews with health and finance experts who provide insights and suggestions on financial wellness, cultivating healthy behaviors, and leading a balanced life.

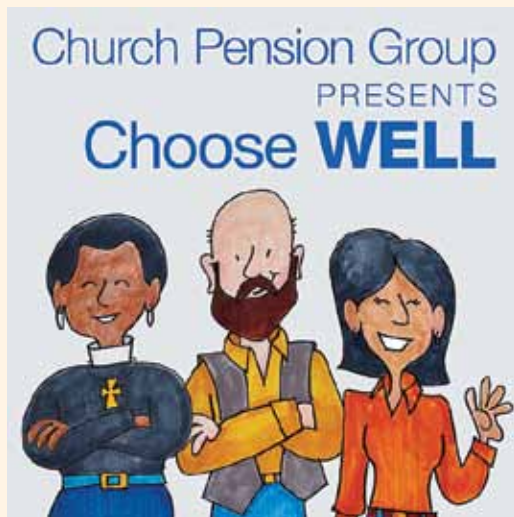
Individuals can access "Choose Well" through a podcast app or CPG's website ([cpg.org/podcast](http://cpg.org/podcast)).

"We are always looking for new ways to inform and educate our clients on topics of importance to their well-being, and we are pleased to be able to introduce this podcast series at a time when many are experiencing increased emotional and financial stress," said Mary Kate Wold, CPG chief executive officer and president.

"Our hope is that the topics covered in Choose Well will help our clients and others navigate these uncertain times."

The nine-part series, hosted by CPG Senior Health Education Specialist Krishna Dholakia, identifies

actions listeners can take to improve specific areas of their lives, which in turn can lead to a more holistic sense of well-being. It features practical steps listeners can take to protect themselves from investment fraud, cope with caution fatigue, weather financial strains,



and help cultivate other healthy behaviors and lead a balanced life.

CPG provides retirement, health, life insurance, and related benefits for clergy and lay employees of the Episcopal Church, as well as property and casualty insurance and book and music publishing, including the official worship materials of the church. ■

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## FAITH AND THE ARTS

## Surviving the Lenten desert with Leonard Cohen

By Chris Cuthill

*Editor's note: Although this article was published in 2012 and poet/songwriter Leonard Cohen died in 2016 at age 82, his art lives forever. The author describes a Lenten journey beginning with a Cohen album that was new at the time.*

It is interesting that we often use the word “journey” when we refer to Lent, because Lent is a decidedly non-linear season for the church.

We like to think of journeys as linear things, getting from point A to point B, going somewhere. But Lent isn't about going somewhere. Lent is a time-out for the church — a season in which the church as a whole enters into an extended retreat.

It's not a time for doing anything or going anywhere, but for spending time in the desert. This desert is not a geographical place of sand and sagebrush that you walk through to get to the other side. The Lenten desert is a place for meandering with God as we take the time to step away from what Paul metaphorically referred to as a race.

Every year I choose a piece of art, music, or literature to frame my personal rambling journey. This year I spent some Lenten time with Leonard Cohen and his album “Old Ideas.” This album, Cohen's swan song, is about waiting for death, a decidedly Lenten theme. At 77, Cohen seems to have developed an elegiac acceptance of his physical and moral frailty.

He stares into the abyss and patiently waits for a home without sorrows or burdens, a place he will go “without this costume that I wore.” With his gravelled-raw baritone and amelodic cadences, the troubadour with the “golden” voice offers a memento mori as his parting words.

The title of this album has a double meaning. These are songs about getting old, and the hard-won wisdom of a septuagenarian who has looked for love wherever he could find it — be it the momentary serenity of a Zen koan or the embrace of a woman he'd love to forget.

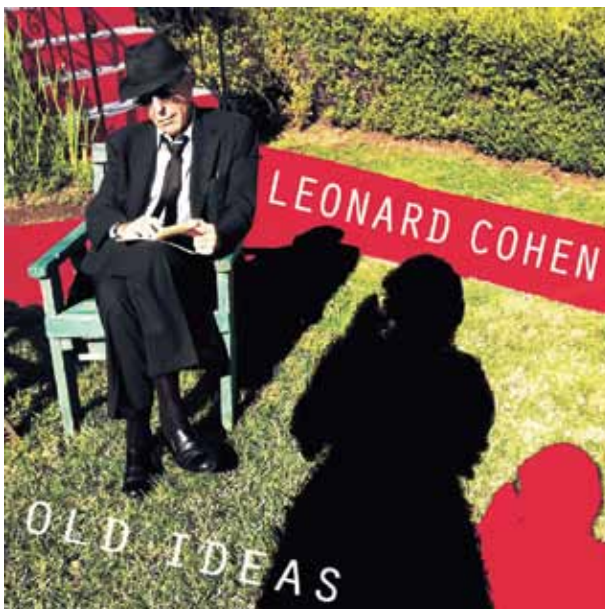
But these are also old ideas because they are canonical. The themes of lust and regret, the willing flesh and the weakened spirit, are not new. Cohen has been shuffling these cards of love, faith, and moral languor for almost fifty years. But here these familiar ideas are imbued with the gravitas of a grave-bed confession.

The opening words of this album belong to God—a sardonic address to the self-styled sage whom Cohen self-deprecatingly calls a “lazy bastard living in a suit.” Call it gallows humor, but dying is darkly comic.

Still, God seems to enjoy spending time with Leonard, and Leonard in turn says, “Show me the place where you want your slave to go.” While Cohen tries to shake the prophetic image, he really does speak like a prophet — not as a willing messenger, but as an unlikely friend of God dragged to the mercy seat in irresistible chains by panting and scratched angels.

Like a biblical prophet of old, Cohen speaks words that are both apocalyptic and allusive. As the high priest of lyrical minimalism, he chooses his words with more circumspection than most of us take when choosing a spouse.

Like nobody else, Cohen manages to create word pictures that are ambivalent



but compelling, offering metaphors that are potent but unstrained—suggestive without closing the hermeneutic loop. Deeply steeped in biblical language, Cohen draws upon the scriptures, not to teach, but to exhume them as relics for a shared pilgrimage.

Perhaps this is why I have always liked Cohen. He invites dialogue with the Christian story, drawing upon its promise of redemption in a way that allows me to transpose my story over his. In the time of Lent we wait together, Christian and Jew, for the Messiah to come. We wait for a time “when the filth of the butcher is washed in the blood of the lamb.”

“Old Ideas,” Cohen puts it, is a “manual for living with defeat,” a kind of ecclesiastical confession of a career ladies' man seeking post-coital atonement. But for all the despair, Old Ideas is not a bleak album.

Cohen's sepulchral disclosures are counterbalanced by penitential hymns of healing and renewal. For Cohen, redemp-

tion is no esthetic escape from the fullness of life. Dropping his Buddhist robes, he rejects a Gnostic view of death as release from the weight of our carnal coil.

In one of the album's prettier moments, the song “Come Healing” offers a cry to the heavens for healing of both the spirit and the limb, the body and the mind. For a man who has made a career out of blurring the distinction between physical and spiritual ecstasy, such a prayer seems appropriate.

Jesus went into the desert for 40 days and 40 nights. During the season of Lent, Christians enter into a participation in Jesus, in his solitude, silence, and pain. Many Christians abstain from certain food and drink during this time as a way of recognizing that we observe this season as physical creatures, not as ghosts in the machine who contemplate from the distance.

We enter into this season as people who still suffer—some emotionally, some physically, some to complete, as Paul said, the sufferings of Christ. And together with Cohen, we say, “Show me the place where the Word became a man, show me the place where the suffering began.”

To follow Cohen through these songs is a somatically reverential experience. “Old Ideas” is an album for the Lenten desert place — where there are few oases and the sun bakes our skin. It is a place where we learn to depend on, and wrestle with, God — and if we are like Cohen, we will hobble to the gates of mercy with a limp. ■

*Artist Chris Cuthill is former art chair at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, Canada. His website can be found at [www.chriscuthill.com](http://www.chriscuthill.com). This article was first published on Apr. 5, 2012 by Comment ([www.cardus.ca](http://www.cardus.ca)).*

## Book offers hope in journey through Lent

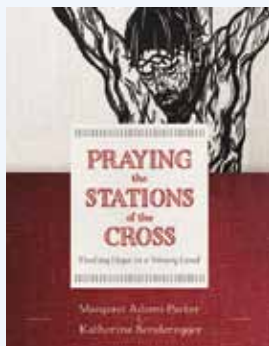
Review by Jerry Hames

What better time during the isolation caused by physically distancing from family and friends during the pandemic, coupled with the desire to drive away the winter's cold, than to pick up a book that takes us through the solemnity of the Lenten season, offering a promise of hope for the days ahead?

The Stations of the Cross is a devotional practice that originated in the early centuries of Christianity. Pilgrims who could not actually walk the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem — the “sorrowful road” that it is believed Jesus took from Pilate's judgment hall to Golgotha to face his crucifixion — were able to simulate this experience by meditating upon a series of images.

This noteworthy book, a collaboration between Margaret Adams Parker,

an artist, and Katherine Sounderegger, a preacher, both faculty members at Virginia Theological Seminary, leads read-



**Praying the Stations of the Cross: Finding Hope in a Weary Land**

By Margaret Adams Parker and Katherine Sounderegger

Eerdmans, \$15.99

ers through the traditional 14 Stations, from Jesus' trial, through his humiliation, suffering, crucifixion and entombment. For each Station they provide a simple liturgy of Scripture readings coupled with prayer, a Taizé chant, silence, a longer meditation and a graphically powerful woodcut image.

Of significance is the book's subtitle, “Finding Hope in a Weary Land.”

The co-authors say they write from the conviction that the Stations offer consolation and hope at all times, not constrained by Lent or Holy Week. “It is simply not true that the Stations' only message for us is that of suffering,” they say, encouraging the reader to share their conviction that contemplating Christ's Passion can be a life-affirming practice.

Readers may also benefit from introductory chapters with a history of this spiritual practice and suggestions for praying the Stations. Each author also contributes an Afterword: Parker about the years she spent discerning, then producing the Stations, some of which have been revised and altered over the years; and Sounderegger, who describes the craft of sermon writing and the practice and discipline required to make the word its own art form. ■

*Jerry Hames is editor emeritus of Episcopal Journal.*



*Station XIII: Jesus Is Placed in the Arms of His Mother. The body that Mary cradles is torn and bloody. “Mary is every woman — every mother, every wife, every daughter, every sister — who is vulnerable through the suffering of those she loves,” the accompanying meditation says.*



## FAITH AND THE ARTS

# An artist's effort to grapple with tuberculosis resonates during COVID-19

By Elizabeth Lee

Like everyone else, artists have been challenged by new conditions and routines since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many have had to adjust what they make as well as how and where they work, coming up with innovative ways to be productive in makeshift studios with limited supplies and in relative isolation.

One thing is certain, though: In response to daily headlines of devastating illness, suffering and death, the need for creative expression and meaningful reflection on loss remains essential.

For the past several years, I've been researching the impact of disease on late 19th-century American artists. At the time, medical science was ill-equipped to manage rising rates of communicable disease, leaving art to help fill a need to comprehend and process illness.

One of the artists featured in my forthcoming book on art and disease is the painter Abbott Thayer, whose life and work underwent dramatic change following the death of his wife from tuberculosis. For the grieving painter, art functioned as a kind of medicine.

### A romantic disease

In the late 18th century, tuberculosis started to be tinged with romanticism; it was thought of as an illness that could lead to elevated consciousness, creative insight and intellectual acuity. The poet John Keats and the pianist Frédéric Chopin both died young from tuberculosis, cementing its reputation as an affliction of artists.

An early biographer of Robert Louis Stevenson argued that tuberculosis enhanced the writer's talent, and in a sculptural relief depicting Stevenson during a stay in New York, Augustus Saint-Gaudens portrays the bohemian writer with long hair and a cigarette in hand, looking alert and productive, despite being propped up by a stack of pillows in bed. As one critic observed, the relief captured Stevenson's "picturesque unfitness," as though illness heightened his allure.

If the effects of the disease were poorly understood, so was the way in which it spread.

For hundreds of years, the cause of disease was believed to be miasmas, or foul-smelling air. Eventually, in the 1880s, medical science realized invisible microorganisms were the source of contagion, and that germs could be quietly passed from person to person. Unlike miasmas, which could be identified through smell, germs moved undetected through crowded cities. They were everywhere.

### Pure air and healthy living

By the time the wife of painter Abbott Thayer succumbed to the disease in 1891, germ theory was widely accepted and would have been familiar to the artist, who was the son of a physician and public health expert. Fearing his three young children would be next, he sought out a "healthy" environment — a place with plenty of fresh air and surrounded by nature, where the family could eat nutritious meals, roam freely outdoors and get plenty of rest.



Photo/Smithsonian American Art Museum

*In Abbott Thayer's 1887 painting "Angel," his eldest daughter appears as a heavenly figure.*

*In "A Virgin of 1892-3," Abbott Thayer paints his three children outdoors, forging ahead vigorously.*



Photo/Freer Gallery of Art

The Thayers weren't the only family looking for therapeutic settings.

The 1870s marked the start of the sanatorium movement, in which individuals who had tuberculosis, or thought they might, were able to steel themselves against the illness in medically supervised, open-air compounds often near the mountains, desert or the sea. At the time, tuberculosis was the cause of roughly one in seven deaths in the U.S.

The life Thayer created for him and his children in Dublin, N.H., was modeled on this type of facility. Their home, at the base of Mount Monadnock, gave the family ample opportunities to be immersed in fresh mountain air, which was then thought to be the "purest" type of air.

On a typical day, Thayer spent his morning painting and then climbed Monadnock or took long trail walks with his family. These outdoor activities encouraged the kind of deep breathing believed to free toxins from contaminated lungs.

The Thayers also slept outdoors in individualized lean-tos — a three-sided

shelter — that allowed them to breathe fresh air throughout the night. Thayer also invented a "breath catcher" — a device worn around the nose and mouth, not unlike the protective masks of today — which prevented the body's "noxious exhalations" from freezing onto bedding at night, according to the thinking of the time. He also wore a special kind of wool underwear marketed for its protective qualities against disease in a further attempt to avoid germs.

### Angels of vigor

While Thayer was working to protect the health of his family, his art underwent a shift.

Early in his career, Thayer mostly painted landscapes and portraits. But following the illness of his wife Kate, Thayer turned his own children — Mary, Gerald and Gladys — into the primary subjects of his work.

In the first of these, "Angel," he painted his eldest child Mary as a heavenly creature, whose pale, chalky skin — underscored by her white robe and wings — conveys a fragility evoking the effects of tuberculosis.

The painting brings together the contradiction of a healthy daughter and sickly mother, collapsing the promise of wholesome youth and the fear of bodily disintegration.

In "A Virgin of 1892-93," Thayer depicted all three children standing outside. The clouds, which emerge from Mary's shoulders as wings, allude to Thayer's earlier depiction of her in "Angel" and thus to her role as a stand-in for his late wife.

Given the way in which Kate's illness focused the family's attention on nature and health, it seems significant, too, that the children, shown barefoot and windswept, walk vigorously and purposefully. Their classical clothing pays tribute to the ancient Greeks, celebrated in Thayer's



Photo/The Metropolitan Museum of Art

*Relief of Robert Louis Stevenson sculpted by Augustus Saint-Gaudens.*

er's time for their commitment to physical fitness and outdoor living.

Immersed in a therapeutic environment while perhaps on one of their treks up Monadnock, Thayer's children embody the life their father embraced. They become models of healthy outdoor living in an era of contagious disease.

The image may look antiquated, but it resonates today.

Both tuberculosis and COVID-19 target the lungs. Symptoms for both diseases include shortness of breath and coughing. There was no effective way to treat tuberculosis until the development of streptomycin in the 1940s, so prevention and perseverance during Thayer's time — as with COVID-19 — often involved good hygiene and healthy living. Like Mary, Gerald and Gladys, we are still taking walks in nature in an effort to escape the psychological and physical limitations of quarantine.

Today, filling our lungs with fresh air remains a reassuring sign of health — just as it did more than a century ago. ■

*Elizabeth Lee is associate professor of art history at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa. The article was previously published at The Conversation (www.theconversation.com.)*

**“Only a poet can see this clearly, be this honest, and still hope this much.”**  
— Douglas A. Blackmon,  
Winner of the Pulitzer Prize

**“Johnson has laid the healing tools in our hands, and left instructions. This is how it starts.”**  
— Cornelius Eady,  
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## FEATURE

# Inspired by Cranmer, Lenten program combines daily worship and Bible study

By Sharon Sheridan

**A** Lenten program created by a liturgy professor and priest offers a way for congregations to study the Bible within the context of

worship and community in a quintessentially Anglican way.

"I've always been really drawn to the preface that [Thomas] Cranmer wrote to his first prayer book," said the Rev. Kevin Moroney, liturgy professor and chapel director at General Theological Seminary in New York and priest-in-residence at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Clifton, N.J.

"What he explained in this preface is really that the Holy Scriptures can be learned by reading them, book by book, continuously nestled within the arms of the daily prayers, morning and evening," he said. And, when they do so, Cranmer wrote, clergy and laity "become inflamed with the love of God's true religion."

"I love that idea," said Moroney, who also serves on the Episcopal Church Task Force for Liturgical and Prayer Book Revision. "We do that here at General."

But, he said, "if you don't have a background with it, the daily offices of the prayer book are a little hard to follow."

So he created a simplified version of Morning Prayer, short enough to fit on one folded sheet of paper and including one reading, one canticle, one collect and a revised General Thanksgiving. Then he created a daily lectionary of readings us-

ing just one book of the Bible — a task that takes about an hour, he said.

Last year, with the blessing of the church visioning group, St. Peter's members tried out the format as a Lenten study of Luke, Moroney's favorite Gospel. Each



Photo/National Portrait Gallery, London  
*Thomas Cranmer was a leader of the 16th century English Reformation.*

day at home, participants prayed the shortened prayer service using the sequential readings from Luke — usually a chapter or half a chapter at a time. On Sundays, Moroney's sermons were a teaching on that week's reading that incorporated questions the congregation submitted ahead of time or asked that day.

The program barely had started when the COVID-19 pandemic forced worship services in the diocese online. "We had about a day to

figure out what we were going to do on Sunday," Moroney recalled. One of the church's leaders suggested: "Why don't we just take this as the basis of our Sunday service and keep going with it this way?"

"So that's what we did. It really became a long-term program."

St. Peter's streamed worship over Facebook Live, so Moroney addressed questions he received during the week via e-mail and text and sometimes online on Sundays during the broadcast. "There was an element of interactivity. I wouldn't say that that was the most effective part of it."

"The real benefit is, you had more people reading more Scripture and praying the daily offices more — at least Morning Prayer more — than was ever true before in this parish," Moroney said. "And they like it. They wanted to

do it again."

After Easter 2020, the congregation tackled Genesis. Over the summer, they did a thematic study on women of the Bible, from Eve to the women at the tomb. During the fall, they returned to regular Eucharists during in-person worship but moved back online again in Advent. After Christmas, they resumed the Morning Prayer Bible study format with the Book of Exodus.

"In Genesis, we were really taken by the whole idea of providence in the book," Moroney said. "In Exodus now, we're dealing with themes of deliverance. We were looking at it on Sunday and how in America ... we tend to craft our narrative from the perspective of who has the power. But in Exodus, the narrative is written from the perspective of the slaves, and that's a very different way to look at things."

IMMIGRATION continued from page 7

## Immigrant detention and family separation

During Trump's four years, immigrant advocates have complained that his policies have led to individuals being arbitrarily detained and sometimes deported without warning, even when it broke up families. The Trump administration also pursued a "zero tolerance" policy that included separating migrant children from their families at the border as a method of deterrence, until that policy faced intense backlash.

The 79th General Convention passed three resolutions on immigration in 2018, including one that put the church on record as respecting the dignity of immigrants and outlines how public policy should reflect that belief. Another opposed family separations and inhumane treatment of immigrant parents and children.

Although many migrant families have since been reunited, immigrant advocacy groups scrambled last year to locate the parents of more than 500 remaining children who were orphaned by the Trump administration's policies. Since the election, Biden's team has met with advocates to discuss ways of supporting reunification efforts and to restore the immigrant community's trust after the damage done by the family separations.

## Temporary Protected Status, or TPS

When Trump took office in 2017, foreign nationals from several countries were protected from deportation because previous administrations had granted them Temporary Protected Status. The status recognizes the threats to their safety of returning to home countries, typically because of wars or natural disasters. TPS now applies to 10 countries. Most of the hundreds of thousands of recipients are originally from El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti.

General Convention approved a reso-

The simplified Morning Prayer takes about 15 or 20 minutes and leads participants through continuous readings of books of the Bible instead of only certain passages as typically happens with the Revised Common Lectionary.

"What I'm pleased about is ... Episcopal Christians who did not have much background with the Bible, in a year, have significant books of the Bible under their belt," Moroney concluded. "They've read them and they've read them within their daily prayer. Their prayer life is growing while their knowledge of Scripture is growing. It's part of the genius of what Cranmer was trying to do." ■

*The Rev. Sharon Sheridan Hausman is a priest in the Diocese of Newark. This article first appeared in The VOICE Online in the Diocese of Newark (N.J.).*

lution in 2015 pledging to support Temporary Protected Status "for all immigrants fleeing for refuge from violence, environmental disaster, economic devastation, or cultural abuse or other forms of abuse."

The Trump administration tried to end protections for many of those with TPS, saying the status never was intended to offer immigrants permanent residency. Those TPS terminations are on hold while they are being contested in federal court. Last month, the Department of Homeland Security ordered an



Photo/Reuters  
*People protest Trump administration cuts to the U.S. refugee resettlement program, in Washington, D.C., in October 2019.*

extension of the protections until October while the legal case is pending.

Biden promised during the campaign that he would ensure no one is forced to return to countries where conditions remain unsafe. He said his administration would review TPS and seek a path to U.S. citizenship for those who have spent much of their lives in the United States.

"The feeling right now is very positive and optimistic," said Elmer Romero, an Episcopalian and Salvadoran American who works with Salvadoran TPS recipients in Houston, Texas, through the support group Crecen. The recent extension of protections through October was only a "temporary victory," he told ENS, and with a new Congress and new administration in the White House, he and other advocates will push for a more permanent solution. ■

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## FEATURE

# Congregation builds Holy Land app, inviting Episcopalians to join virtual pilgrimage

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

Hundreds of Episcopalians have embarked on a walking pilgrimage around the Holy Land without ever having to set foot outside their neighborhoods. There's an app for that, built by St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church in Columbia, S.C.

The church's smartphone app, which launched on Nov. 29, allows users to trace a virtual 97-mile path through and around Jerusalem that follows the story of the Gospel of Luke. As with a fitness tracker, the app logs your mileage whenever you walk – wherever you are in the world – and the app's map shows equivalent distances covered in the Holy Land, divided into six segments.

It isn't exactly a substitute for an actual Holy Land pilgrimage, like the one that St. Martin's-in-the-Fields clergy leaders had hoped to plan with their congregation. But with the coronavirus pandemic curbing international travel, this digital alternative has been widely embraced by phone-based pilgrims interested in learning about the land where Jesus once walked.

The app is available on the Apple App Store or Google Play.

"It's hard to know the stories, to be able to really go deep into the stories of the Gospel, without seeing the places where they happened," the Rev. Susan Prinz, associate rector, told Episcopal News Service.

Prinz hatched the idea for the app last October with the Rev. Caitlyn Darnell, a deacon who serves as the church's director of formation and mission. To build it, they hired the Rev. Greg Johnston, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Boston, who had previous experience in developing faith-based apps.

For much of the fall, Prinz and Darnell worked with the Rev. Mitch Smith, rector of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, to create videos and other content that Johnston could use to flesh out the app. They also enlisted Episcopal and Anglican colleagues from around the world to contribute, including Jerusalem Bishop Coadjutor Hosam Naoum, who recorded a video welcome.

Prinz and Naoum knew each other from studying together at Virginia Theological Seminary, and Prinz had traveled to Israel twice, in 2012 and 2016. Those

trips "made me see Jesus in a deeper way and experience his life in a way unlike anything I'd ever experienced before," Prinz said. She approached the app with those experiences in mind.

Darnell hasn't been to Israel, but in 2019, she joined a group organized by the Episcopal Church's United Thank Offering that walked part of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Like the Camino, the virtual Holy Land pilgrimage can be completed at a pace of the pilgrim's choosing. "You can start the pilgrimage at any time, and you walk it until you're finished," Darnell told ENS.

Participation has expanded well beyond St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. Through word of mouth and some online promotion, about 500 people registered in advance and received the church's printed pilgrimage guidebook by mail. Some congregations around the United States joined St. Martin's-in-the-Fields in taking up the app as their Advent activity, and Darnell said the virtual pilgrimage has attracted pilgrims from as far away as the Philippines.

The app tracks mileage using health trackers on users' phones. Along the way, virtual pilgrims can learn about holy sites and landmarks by "unlocking" content produced and curated by the staff of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. They also get to know the various characters in the Gospel story.

Stage 1, for example, entails nine miles of walking, to cover the equivalent distance from Ain Kareem to Bethlehem. After the first mile, walkers can read Prinz's post about Elizabeth and Zechariah. Another two miles unlocks a video by Darnell about the Annunciation. The holy sites and landmarks highlighted by the app mirror those that drew a million Christian pilgrims to Israel in 2019. But like actual Holy

Land pilgrims, the app's virtual pilgrims are more than tourists.

"The general focus of the pilgrimage is very spiritual," Darnell said. "Immerse yourself in the story of Christ. Put yourself in the story. How does it relate to you? How will you grow spiritually? Who will you be on the other side of this?"



Photo/David Paulsen/ENS

*The Holy Land pilgrimage app created by St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church in Columbia, S.C., allows users to follow the Gospel story in and around Jerusalem without setting foot outside their neighborhoods.*

Darnell added that this pilgrimage can be completed even by people who can't or choose not to walk the miles. They have the option of advancing to the destinations by completing devotional tasks to earn points, such as praying the Daily Office, doing an act of charity or meditating in silence for 15 minutes.

The app ends with Jesus' Transfiguration, thought to have occurred on Mount Tabor. Creating and soliciting

more than 50 pieces of content for that app kept St. Martin's-in-the-Fields leaders busy for about a month and a half, and they already are considering options for a second virtual pilgrimage for Lent, possibly following the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, Jesus' final path to the crucifixion. The app also can be used to host other types of pilgrimages, such as a tour of local landmarks of the civil rights movement.

St. Martin's-in-the-Fields has welcomed widespread usage of the app for anyone interested in joining the congregation's Holy Land pilgrimage, and congregations are invited to build their own virtual pilgrimages using the app, if they decide they have the vision, ambition and staff needed to give it a try.

"From the beginning, we said we're offering this for the whole church. We want absolutely everybody to be a part of this with us," Darnell said. "We're all trying to make pandemic ministry work." ■



Image/ENS

*The virtual pilgrimage app logs walking miles on an equivalent route around the Holy Land, or users can unlock content by completing devotional tasks for points.*

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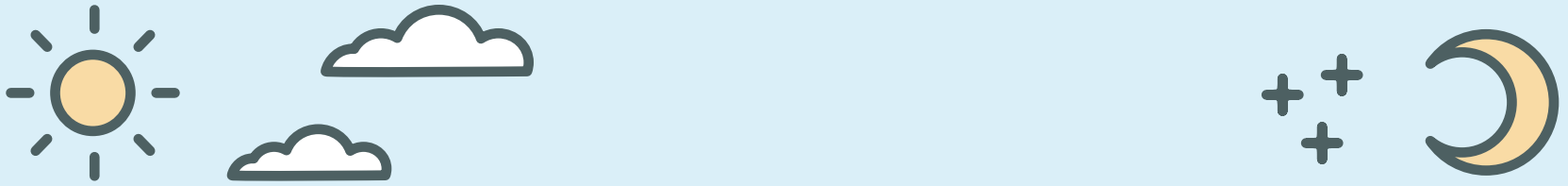
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